

Every Outcast's War

by Got the Jitters

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Summary: "I'm a dragon. Dragons kill their enemies. He's a Viking. My enemy. It's as simple as that. So why can't I finish him? I don't know why now, but I know that if I do, I'll never be able to forget those forest green eyes." Alternate Universe. ON HIATUS but NOT abandoned!

1. Chapter 1: Shot From The Sky

Chapter One: Shot From The Sky

Have you ever been right in the middle of the Best Dream Ever, only to wake up and have cold reality shoved in your face? In my dream, I was the hero, all the male dragons were tearing each other apart for the honor of courting me, and absolutely NO ONE called me the Ultimate Freak or any other insulting name. I was in heaven. The Queen was just giving me the title Dragon Princess, when the other dragons began to roar applause. I growled with pleasure. But then their roaring began to sound an awful lot like a chant, and before I knew it, they were no longer roaring applause, but repeatedly chanting, "Raid! Raid! Raid! Kill, Burn, Destroy! Raid! Raid! Raid!"

Huh? My eyes shot open. The Queen was ordering the dragons to go out and raid the worthless Viking pests, and the other dragons were doing the traditional raid battle-cry chant. I felt a tremor run through my body upon hearing the familiar chant and I sprang to my feet quickly. This might be it! I might finally prove myself to the Nest! Kill a Viking, and my life gets infinitely better. Killing a Kid might get me noticed a little, but I seriously doubt it. To slay a Teenager would certainly get me noticed, and I might be able to show my face in public without getting spat upon. Young Adults are tough; killing one of those would definitely get me a boy friend. Mature Adults are deadly, and honestly I don't know if I'm brave enough to fight one. Then there's the Experienced Slayers, only the best dragons go after those. But the biggest prize is the Chieftain. No one's ever come

close to defeating him, and if I succeed, I might actually become the Dragon Princess.

But then cold reality comes slamming down hard. Killing a Viking is my number one dream, but right now it's just a distant fantasy that has no hope of ever coming true. Every dragon plays some role in the raids. The best dragons lead the raid, and give orders. The next-best dragons fight on the front lines, and are usually the first to attack and last to leave. The third-best dragons serve as often-needed backup, who basically circle above the village and watch the battle below. If a backup dragon sees a front-line dragon in trouble, they swoop in to the rescue, and help fight off the surprised Viking. Then if the front-line dragon isn't too badly injured, the backup dragon flies back up into the sky and begins circling again in search of other dragons in trouble. If the front-lines dragon is badly injured, the backup dragon guards the injured dragon's back and helps get it to safety before taking the front-lines dragon's place in the fighting. After the raid, the dragon that was saved will speak up and tell the Nest how the backup dragon rescued them. If the other dragons are impressed enough by the backup dragon, the backup dragon might find itself promoted to the front-line rank.

I would be happy and content as a backup dragon, thrilled if I was promoted to the front-lines, and probably burst with joy if I become a commanding dragon. But no, I get stuck with the smallest of the small roles, stealing. While the other dragons are out in the firelight, fighting for promotions, and slaying Vikings, I and a few other low-rankers steal the food on the outskirts of the village. We use the shadows as cover, strike fast, and get out of there with whatever catches we make. We then fly to a nearby hiding place where we dump the food, before going back for more. We go back and forth collecting as much as we can before time runs out and we have to retreat back to the Nest. That's basically what I do non-stop all through a raid, while all the other higher ranking dragons keep the Vikings so busy that they never even see us as we snatch up their sheep one by one.

When enough chaos and destruction has been caused, and the commanding dragons have decided that we've fought long enough, each dragon will grab the most food they can carry and fly away quickly. The food that they grab while retreating is the food we usually give to the Queen, while the food that I and the other low-rankers collect during the raid is divided and shared among the Nest.

Am I never going to get out of the shadows? Always just steal food? What do I have to do to get moved up a rank? I already know the answer. To move up the ranks, I need to not be me. I'm the freak no one wants to see, the outcast. I think the Viking term is "loser". If a Viking were to see me, they wouldn't have a clue what species I am. That's because I'm a hybrid. My father was a great Night Fury, and my mother was a beautiful Deadly Nadder. Isn't it funny how two of the greatest dragon species ever, combined makes the clumsiest and most awkward hybrid ever? The Nest doesn't have anything in particular against hybrids; it's just the awkward, clumsy, weird-looking ones like me they don't like.

My head, body, and legs are just like a full-blood Deadly Nadder's, but my wings and tail are that of a Night Fury's. My scales can be sky blue, so I obviously can't blend into the night like my Night Fury father. To make up for it I have to stay deep in the shadows and

move quietly in order to remain unseen. My fire is my biggest secret, because it is one of my greatest advantages. You see, I have inherited both the Night Fury's exploding fire bolts, and the Deadly Nadder's metal-melting scorching flame. Every dragon's flame is a different slightly different color. Mine is a golden-yellow color. My aunt says it's pretty, but I say it still doesn't make up for my clumsiness. I keep the fact that I can breathe both forms of fire a secret because it is my only strength against any enemies I might fight. I never flame in front of other dragons, and I think they wonder if I can even breathe fire.

I think you get the picture. I'm a loser, freaky-looking, an outcast, and I basically only have one strength which I keep secret so as to surprise any enemies I might fight. I am a clumsy flier because I've never had a Night Fury teach me how to use my wings and tailfins. All I've ever had is a Deadly Nadder aunt who does her best, but honestly she doesn't have a clue how a Night Fury flies and neither do I. Fortunately though, between her help and my instincts I've been able to figure out enough to get airborne.

The other dragons are taking off now. With a sigh, I follow. As we rise into the night sky, all my depressed thoughts vanish. The crisp, cool air and the great anticipation of adventure flowing through our ranks causes even the most down dragons to go into high spirits. We fly high into the sky, so high I feel like I could touch the stars, even though that's quite impossible. Banking gently, we let the flowing air fill our wings and carry us over the water. The smell of the sea fills my nostrils, and my sharpened senses tell me many fish swim below. The soft glow of the moon make the clouds gleam like silver. The gentle sounds of the wind blowing, the waves splashing, and our wings flapping fill me with happiness and peace.

But as we near the village the spell is broken. The fires in the village make it glow with an evil-looking light, and as the Vikings roar battle cries up at us and clamor to gather their shields and weapons, I can't help but shudder inwardly a little. I shake my head and clear my mind of all fear. I'm a dragon, and dragons don't shudder in fear of anything. Breaking off from the main group of dragons before the Vikings have a chance to see me, I dive towards the outskirts and the shadows of the village, just like I always do.

I swoop down near a sheep and snatch it up in the blink of an eye. Another sheep (the dumb creatures) immediately walks up to the spot where the old sheep had been and continues grazing as if nothing had happened. I guess this is sort of normal for them on a typical night. Shows just how often we have to raid this place in order to get food for both ourselves and the Queen. I flap my wings once, and rather clumsily attempt to turn. I lose my balance and topple to the side, falling dangerously close to the ground. I resist the temptation to shriek, it would draw unwanted attention. I flap my wings frantically and manage to regain my balance before flying back up into the night sky. I'm glad no other dragons were there to see that mistake.

On an average night, I would continue on with my task and nothing overly exciting would happen. But this night is no average night. I hear a whoosh sound and out of the corner of my eye I see something hurtling through the blackness of night straight towards me. My dragon instincts, which are normally buried deep inside of me, rise up and take over. I dive downwards and narrowly dodge whatever it

was. I feel the breeze it causes as it flies over my head, and I go into a series of evasive maneuvers, which normally I wouldn't have been able to accomplish if all of the Nest were watching. Once again, I suppose it is the dragon instincts that enable me to stay in the air. Just when I slow down a bit, thinking that I'd escaped whatever it was, I hear another whoosh sound, and before I have a chance to react a long, snake-like, something wraps itself around me. This time I don't even try to stifle the scream. My wings are pinned to my sides, and all my limbs are bound. I struggle uselessly as the ground comes up to meet me. "Hello, ground. It's been awhile, have you missed me?" I think stupidly as I make contact.

I blink. My mind swims, and I feel absolutely winded. That landing should have knocked me unconscious. Perhaps I'm tougher than I thought. Any case, I'm on the ground, and bound by some sort of rope-net thingy. I struggle with all my might. My spikes, which are as long and sharp as a Deadly Nadder's, rub against the ropes. I get an idea, and begin to rub vigorously against the restraining ropes. It takes a lot of effort, but my spikes eventually work like knives and cut enough rope for me to pull the rest off. I spring to my feet triumphantly and look around. The first thing I lay eyes on is a small, scrawny male Teenager. He doesn't look anything like the other Teenagers, and something tells me he'll be an easy kill. I notice that he's pushing some sort of wooden contraption. I piece together the clues and realize he was the one who shot me down. He had apparently just arrived at my crash-landing site in time to witness me stand up.

Thoughts of all sorts bounce around in my head, but I only act on one. "This is my chance!" I spring forward with my most intimidating roar, which to a dragon sounded pitiful, but to this Viking it sounded terrifying. His eyes widen with terror, and he seems frozen on the spot. When I blast the area with fire, he just barely dodges in time. With a yelp, he runs for his life towards the center of the village. Without thinking, I follow, snapping at his heels the whole time. He screams for help, and dodges everywhere he can. When he hides behind a pole of some sort, I blast the back of it with fire. When it fails to kill him, I slowly approach the pole, and while he looks around the pole to the right, I come around on the left. I pounce and pin him to the ground with a speed that surprises even me. Finally, it's time for my first kill. I rear back, and gather the gas in my mouth needed to breathe the fire that would burn him to a crisp in an instant. As I do so, our eyes meet.

His are a deep forest green. They are striking, but they are not what grab the most of my attention. What cause me to freeze are the intense emotions swimming in them. Fear. Sadness. Loneliness. The gas is gathered, all I have to do is ignite it and release. When I do so, my dreams will come true. I'll move up the ranks, fight along with the others, and most importantly, I'll be accepted by the Nest. But suddenly, I can't bring myself to do it. "No! I have to! This is what I wanted!" I think sternly to myself. I shake my head, and gather myself once more for the kill. But as I prepare to kill him, our eyes meet again for a brief instant. First they show terror, then grief, and finally acceptance. He sighs and goes limp, perfectly prepared to die. That's when I realize that I can't do it. I should kill him, I wanted to kill him, but I can't bring myself to. I'm a dragon. Dragons kill their enemies. He's a Viking. My enemy. It's as simple as that. So why can't I finish him? I don't know why now, but I know that if I do, I'll never be able to forget those forest green

eyes.

With a moan, I release him.

A/N: So, people, what do you think? I think that I'm insane to try and write this story. I will greatly appreciate reviews, and I could use any advice or corrections you can give me, and ideas for future chapters would be nice to. You see, reviews = motivation = faster updates. If you want to flame me, I guess there's not much I can do to stop you, but I will probably just ignore them. Let's see, what am I forgetting? Oh yah, the all-important disclaimer.

Disclaimer: As I think you've figured out by now, I don't own anything about How to Train Your Dragon except some broken action figures, and they are actually my brother's.

Well, that's it for now. So please review, and I hope you have a nice day or night, depending on the time.

2. Chapter 2: The Death Ring of No Return

A/N: As you can see I decided to put the author's note first from now on. Why? Because I want to, because I CAN! I know that isn't much of a reason, but still! Anyways, I want to thank the following people for reviewing,

Sincerely The Sign Painter: Thanks! Don't worry; I have every intention of continuing this.

CuteBlueCherri: I believe I've already told you thank you, but it can't hurt to do it again! Thanks so much! My goal was to make the dragon like Hiccup, so I'm glad you thought it was.

SwiftslashxLeafstorm: Thank you! I'm really flattered that you thought this was so amazing. I just hope I can keep all the chapters so good.

Well, that's everyone, so I'm going to just start this next chapter.

Chapter Two: The Death Ring of No Return

The Viking seems stunned for a moment, before gathering his senses and looking up at me, wonder and fright clearly visible in his expression. Uncertainly he scrambles slowly to his feet, obviously worrying that I might pounce on him again. But I don't. I just stand still and look at him. He looks right back. His gaze sweeps over my unusual body, committing every detail to memory. When he takes in all of my appearance, his own eyes come back to meet my eyes, and as I look into them they show silent thanks. I growl softly and nod my head in the overall direction of the center of the village. He immediately understands, and starts to move in that direction, but then hesitates. In that moment of hesitation, a large, bulky figure bursts into the scene, tackling the Teenager to the ground and shoving him away from me. I rear back and hiss, worried for my new found "friend". The figure stands up and turns around.

What I see chills me to the bone. I am facing none other than the great Chieftain, who is large enough to make a Gronkle cower, fast enough to overwhelm a Deadly Nadder, strong enough to daunt a Hideous Zippleback, fierce enough to scare away a Monstrous Nightmare, and deadly enough to frighten a Night Fury. In other words, I turn tail and run. I spread my wings and clumsily lift into the air, but flying-nets, as I now remember dragons call them, whizz through the air so intensely I am forced to drop back to the ground in order to avoid them.

"_Where are all of those coming from?"_ I wonder in dismay.

I am answered a second later by the sight of a swarm of Vikings charging towards me. Panicking, I breathe as much fire as I can manage on everything flammable around me, and blast the ground in front of me with fire. As the flames leap high, the Vikings are forced to slow because of the intense heat. Once again, I spread my wings and try to fly, but once again am foiled by the swarm of flying-nets instantly sent my way.

"_Come on, where are those backup dragons when you actually need them?"_

I roar loudly, and do my best to look intimidating, but that's hard to do when you're actually running for your life. I'm trapped, with the Chieftain in one direction, and the group of Vikings in the other. I run back and forth for a moment, and then I grow so panicked I simply fly straight up, heedless of the many obstacles in my way. This may or may not have been a mistake, the world will never know. If I had stayed on the ground, I might have fought my way out, but I doubt it. The result would probably have been the same as it is. I pay for my panic attack and blind retreat by flying strait into a flying-net. As my limbs are pinned down for the second time this night, I feel pure, utter terror. Something I have never felt before and hope I never feel again. This time the hard ground knocks me out completely.

When I slowly come to, the first thing I realize is that my limbs are no longer bound. Starting to hope, I open my eyes only to be met with pitch black darkness. The ground underneath me is hard, smooth, and cold like stone instead of nice, soft, and considerably warmer, dirt. I stumble to my feet and feel around through the dark. From what I can tell, I'm in a box-shaped cave of some sort. Instead of being damp though, it is dry. No cave would be so dry, or have such straight walls, and it certainly wouldn't be box-shaped. It reminds me of one of the many small, odd, and flammable Viking nests; only the average Viking nest is warmer, brighter, and larger. This "cave" is so small my tail brushes the sides every time I turn. My train of thought stops right there as my mind suddenly puts the pieces together and comes to a terrifying realization. I know where I am. I don't know what name the Vikings have for it, but I know all too well what dragons call it. The Death Ring of No Return.

It is large and circle shaped. In a ring shape around the circle is lots of benches for cheering Vikings to sit on. Inside of the "Onlookers Ring" as we have come to call the ring of benches, is the actual Death Ring. It is a big open circle that is a full ten dragons' length across the diameter. Staining the stone floor red is the blood of hundreds of dragons. Surrounding the Death Ring are many huge bulky doors, especially designed to resist dragon's desperate

attacks. Behind each set of doors is a pen, like mine, with a single live captured dragon in each one. Above the Ring is a large metal dome with many wide gaps in it so Vikings can look in and watch easily. To prevent our escaping, the gaps are securely blocked by thick chains fastened to the metal dome. When Teenagers are being trained, they come to work in the Death Ring. A dragon is released into the Ring, and the Vikings fight it until the dragon is either killed or forced back into its cage. Usually, during a training session the dragon is not killed, and thanks to close supervision by Adult Vikings, the Teenagers are never killed. But every full moon, a single dragon is picked to be slain by the top Teenager while the Vikings look on, cheering. Each captured dragon knows their turn is coming; they will be killed by the Vikings at some point or other. No dragon has ever escaped from the Death Ring alive. Thus, the "No Return" part of its name.

And it is here that I am trapped, in the same pen countless other dragons had once been trapped in, dragons whose blood now stains the Death Ring's stone floor. My now probably brief future looks dark. My only remaining comfort is the thought that maybe, just maybe, my life will end soon and quickly.

3. Chapter 3: Despair

A/N: Hello! I'm baaaaaaaack! Yahâ€| I need to calm down. But it's so hard when so many people are reading this and liking it! (Does a happy dance) Anyways, a big THANK YOU to the following reviewers:

Sincerely The Sign Painter: In case you are mixed up, this dragon is an OC and female, but she will be taking the place of Toothless. I don't know what I'm going to call her yet. But I am glad you like it, and yes, you are right to pity her. She is in trouble, that's for sure.

Toothless-the-nightfury: I am so happy you think this story is brilliant! Thank you for taking the time to review!

Smegs32: Thanks for telling me you think it's interesting! I'm thrilled with every review I get.

SwiftslashxLeafstorm: Thanks once again reviewing! I already sent you a PM with my answer.

ONE MORE THING: I need really cool ideas for female dragon names. I can't exactly name her Toothless you know! If you have an idea, please include that in your review!

That's it for now, soâ€|..

Chapter Three: Despair

Now that I think about it, maybe savagely attacking the walls in a blind panic with complete disregard for personal safety and pain was a bad idea. I am now bruised from head to tail-tip, my claws are bloody from where I almost ripped them out in my frenzied tearing at the wall, I am completely winded, and absolutely nothing has been accomplished except for the aforementioned injuries. The wall escaped completely unharmed. I'm beginning to hate the wall.

With a moan of absolute despair and hopelessness, I collapse once again. This time I don't bother to get up. My claws ache, and I feel the instinctual urge to lick my wounds, but I don't bother. I'm going to die anyway, and when that happens what good will clean wounds do? Nothing. So I just lie motionless, letting the despair and waves of grief and loneliness wash over me and take over. I lie there for what seems like an eternity. After the first few hours or so, I lose track of the time completely. Hours may have gone by, or years. I don't know, and I honestly don't care anymore. I find myself waiting for something. For what, I don't know, but I am waiting. Perhaps I'm waiting for the end, or maybe I'm waiting for something to happen that might change my situation for better or for worse. But neither of those things occurs. So I keep waiting. While I wait, I think, and remember.

I recall the countless days when I was spat upon and jeered at by the other dragons. I remember the times when I mess up so badly that even my aunt looks at me with shame. From the very beginning, I was scorned and hated. They never even gave me a chance. The only one has ever cared for me is my aunt, and she will probably be the only person who mourns me and remembers me for who I was underneath the all of the awkwardness and clumsiness. That thought is filled with bittersweet emotions. Part of me is glad that at least one person cares for me; while the other is mournful that she is the only one. All I ever wanted was to be accepted as a true dragon, and to be loved by others in the Nest. But nowâ€¦ That will never happen.

I will die with only one person to mourn me. But will she? Will she secretly be overjoyed and relieved that I, a burden and a useless hybrid, am finally taken care of for good? Something moist dampens my snout. I don't bother to wipe it away.

My stomach protests with a low growl, and I realize it has been two days since I ate or drank anything. Dragons are tough creatures, and have a record for surviving months without food or water if they have to, but it is not a comfortable experience and I shudder at the thought of slowly dying of thirst and hunger.

My sensitive ears pick up a sound. Without meaning to, I listen closer.

"I'm hoping for some mauling, like on the shoulder or lower back."

"Yah, it's no fun unless you get a scar out of it."

Definitely Vikings, female by the sound of it. Subconsciously I growl.

"Oh yes. Pain. Love it."

That sounded like a sarcastic male Viking. For some reasonâ€¦ It seemed familiar.

"Ah great, who let him in?"

"Can I switch to the class with the cool Vikings?"

Those remarks were met with cruel laughter. It seems dragons aren't

the only ones with bullying issuesâ€| I lean in closer to the door, or at least I think it's the doorâ€| It's hard to tell in the dark.

Some more conversation is exchanged between the Vikings, but I'm not paying attention enough to translate what they are saying mentally. Instead, I'm paying more attention to the smells drifting in through the door. Most of the scents are unfamiliar, but one stands out to me. But try as I might I can't remember what it belongs to. Then that same sarcastic male voice speaks up again.

"I heard that the dragon we captured last night is a new breed of some sort, can we look at it?"

"Oh, we'll do better than look at it, we're going to fight it!"

"What! But we don't know anything about this breed's abilities or temperament!"

"That is precisely why we must fight it. By battling it, we will learn more about it. As part of a training exercise, it is this class's job to write the page on this dragon's species that will go in the Dragon Manual."

I scoff. Can't they tell a hybrid when they see one?

One of the male Vikings goes ecstatic at this news, while the others were less than thrilled.

"Fishlegs, can't you see this is really dangerous?" one asks.

The ecstatic Viking immediately becomes nervous at this.

I hear a loud groaning noise, and I watch as the door opens. Instead of springing to my feet, I curl tighter on the floor. Confused, one of the Vikings slowly approaches. By the smell, I can tell that it's the sarcastic Viking. When he comes into my view, I am shocked.

This Viking is the one who I spared.

4. Chapter 4: A Bonding Touch

**A/N: **I'M ALIVE! That's right, I'm not dead! The delays will not stop me, and this story WILL be finished if it's the last thing I do! But seriously, I'm very sorry for the long wait. There's just been delay after delay. Surely I'm not the only author on fanfiction who's suffered a severe case of Writer's Block? Thanks for all the great ideas for names, and I had such a hard time choosing one! But she could only have one name, or elseâ€|. MARY SUE WILL ATTACK! So, yeahâ€|

Special thanks to TooAwesome4Words, SwiftslashxLeafstorm, and Sincerely The Sign Painter for reviewing!

**Chapter Four: A Bonding Touch **

I look up at him for a long moment, before moaning and covering my face with my wings. I would rather he just end my life now, and get

it over with. The Vikings are all confused, and debate among themselves.

"What's it doing?"

"What's wrong with it?"

"It's a trap! I know it!"

"If it were a trap, it would've killed Hiccup already, you idiot."

"Hiccup, what are you thinking? Get back!"

Obediently, "Hiccup" as I guess he is called, steps back again and out of my line of vision. I debate lifting my head to see him better, and decide against it.

"Why doesn't it attack us?" one very confused Teenager asks.

"Let's fight another dragon, this one won't even move," another says.

"But we have to write about this dragon! We have to fight it!" yet another protests.

"Let's give it a day and come back to it," the Adult Viking finally decides. "It's probably still in too much shock to fight. But don't worry, I'll bet by tomorrow it will be wild with rage!" he continued.

"Uh, is that supposed to make me feel better?" a Viking Teenager asked in a nervous voice.

I find myself alone in the dark once again as the large heavy doors shut with a loud groan, before locking with a heavy thud. It looks like I'll be left to myself until tomorrow. I can't help but feel a little angry. I had spared that Viking Teenager's worthless life; was it too much to ask if he return the favor? Just once? "Well," I think angrily, "That's what you get for sparing a Viking brat."

Hours later, I am stirred from my fitful sleep by a soft groaning and creaking sound. I lift my head just slightly, expecting to see blinding sunlight as the doors open. "Is it morning already?" I wonder. However, I am met with just a small amount of light, and I realize the sun is going down. Wait, down? It's evening, not morning! The night has just barely begun! What's going on here? I am answered a moment later when the doors open fully and I behold a single, lone Teenager. And I recognize him. He's the one I spared, the one I was just mad at for not returning the favor.

He looks at me calmly, and I glare back at him, but don't growl. Finally he speaks, "I'm sorry it took so long. I just couldn't find an opportunity to come sooner."

My expression turns confused, and I stare at him. He brings out a fish, and says quietly, "I brought you some food."

Once again I glare at him, and raise my head with a low growl. He

flinches back, but instead of attacking I simply turn my back to him so that he can't see my face. He's quiet for a moment, but then says, "You know, this is probably the only chance for food that you'll be getting for awhileâ€|"

Despite myself, my stomach rumbles slightly. But stubbornly, I refuse to face him. He sighs, and then says, "Fine. You can sit there, and think suicidal thoughts all you want, but I'm not going to stop trying to get you to eat. You need the food for strength."

I snort. Hah, that's a good oneâ€|. What good is food when I'm going to die anywayâ€>? Suddenly, I realize what he's saying. I AM becoming suicidal. Of all the things I thought I'd ever be, suicidal and overly depressed is NOT one of them. I glance at the fish, and give it a quick sniff. There's no poison that I can tell. I start to reach for it, but I suddenly spot the knife strapped to his belt. This could be a trap! I recoil and growl, staring at the knife on his belt. I can't believe that I actually forgot this might be a trap, if even for a moment. He glances down at his belt, then back at me. Slowly, he reaches for it, and I brace myself. He then grabs it by the hilt, and unsheathes it. He holds it out, and thenâ€| drops it.

I stare. I've been doing a lot of that lately, haven't I?

He kicks it away from us, way out of reach. Realizing that he's unarmed, I relax slightly. He holds out the fish invitingly, and I cautiously uncoil myself enough to reach it without standing up. Slowly, I open my mouth and wait to see how he reacts. He stands stock still. I snap it out of his hand in an instant, without biting him. He flinches slightly, but shows no other signs of fear. I check him up and down, before determining that he has no more fish on him. As I lean away from him again, I remember for the first time that I know his name now. The other Vikings had called him Hiccup. An odd name, but it is a name. Dragons don't get names unless they're really important, like a Night Fury or a Monstrous Nightmare.

He looks at me for a long moment in wonder, and finally shakes his head. "Rightâ€| well, on to step two."

I give him a confused look, and he clarifies, "You have to stand up now."

When I refuse, he sighs and says, "Please?" He gives me his most adorable pleading look ever, but it has no effect. If he's just trying to get me better so he and the others can fight me, I'm not going to cooperate! He gestures to the ring outside invitingly. Wellâ€| I could just stretch my wingsâ€| I reluctantly get to my feet and step outside my stall. I stand to my full height and unfurl my wings, stretching them to their full length. Hiccup gapes in wonder. I look around in confusion. There's nothing extraordinary in the Ring, so what's he staring at? He looks at my wings and says in an awed voice, "Wow, I just now realized how magnificent your wings are. You must be the best of all dragons when it comes to flight!"

I look at him sadly, wishing it were true. He gazes into my eyes, and asks, "Do you trust me?"

I start. Do I? He has done nothing bad to me, and something tells me that he can be trusted. I might just be going insane, butâ€| Ever so

slowly, I walk towards him. He stretches out his hand, and I sniff at it. Feeling an unusual burst of confidence, I gently place my snout against his palm. We stay like that, and for a moment in time, all is perfect. To him, it might just mean that I'm finally letting him pet me. But it means so much more than that. It's the Bonding Touch, which is what dragons do to seal a pact that can never be broken. When they gently touch noses, or in this case, when I touch his palm, it's like we're sealing a promise. It's a promise that should never, ever be broken. In our case, it's a promise of trust. It's like I'm saying that I trust him, and he can trust me forever. It's like he's saying that I can trust him, and he trusts me. I won't break this promise, but I can only hope that he won't either.

Slowly we move apart. A thoughtful expression spreads across his features, and he says firmly, "You need a name."

I am truly shocked. To receive a name is the greatest honor of all for a dragon. He gives an embarrassed frown and asks me awkwardly, "Soâ€| Are you a guy?" My indignant squawk was enough of an answer. "I'll take that as a no. Sorry about that, it's just with dragonsâ€| it's hard to tell."

Humph! Well, I could use that same excuse with Vikings. They all look alike.

He sits back and studies me. After a moment's thought, he starts listing names. "What do you think about Luna, Willow, or Comet? Or maybe Stormbolt or Ocean? Perhaps Skyweaver, or do you think Skydream sounds better?"

I feel disoriented by the sudden long list of possible names. I'm surprised at Hiccup's naming skills and huge imagination. Has he been thinking up names before now or what? I think those are all good names, but they just don't seem to fit me.

He thinks a moment longer and then says, "What about Aqua or Flare? Those are nice names."

They were, butâ€| no.

"I have one last idea, what do you think about the name Skyshimmer? Shimmer for short?" That seemed the best of all of them. I nod my head eagerly.

"Skyshimmer it is then." He seemed pleased with himself. Little did he know just how much of an honor he has given me.

End
file.